

A RAY OF SONLIGHT

by Bill Robinson

.....I will show thee my faith by my works..... (Jas. 2:18)

These words of scripture are fulfilled by each and every one of us. Whether Jew, Gentile, or Christian, our actions speak louder than our words and demonstrate our faith – weak or strong, in Christ or in Satan. How sobering this should be, especially to Christians!

Christ is the light of the world¹ and we, the members of His body, are used of Him to show forth that light to the world.² We are, in fact, tiny rays of the light of Christ in this world and we may be the only light some men ever see.

Although many claim to be in the light, very few demonstrate this condition by their actions. While a light may be large or small, bright or weak, it is always identifiable as light and is best seen when surrounded by darkness. Do we measure up?

Can we always be identified as members of Christ's body wherever we may be? Does our light shine when we are in a crowd of unbelievers, or must we be with believers for our light to show? Are we rays of light or do we merely reflect the light of those around us? A true light will always shine whether alone or with others.

The only function of light is to dispel darkness and it will always do this. We cannot eliminate light by increasing darkness. In fact, the light shines brighter as the darkness increases. We can, however, increase darkness by removing the light or by pretending to have light when there is none.

As a light dispels darkness, it accomplishes two things. First, it reveals obstacles or dangers that may be hidden in the darkness and second, it will light a path so the traveler may reach his destination safely. A true Christian will be used of God to accomplish the same things. His conduct, in the spirit, serves to reveal the wickedness and evil of the unbelieving world around him and his life serves as an example, leading others to Christ.³

¹ Lu 2:32 A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel. (KJV)

Joh 1:4 In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (KJV)

Joh 8:12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (NKJV)

Joh 9:5 "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." (NKJV)

Joh 12:35 Then Jesus said to them, "A little while longer the light is with you. Walk while you have the light, lest darkness overtake you; he who walks in darkness does not know where he is going. (NKJV)

² Mt 5:14-16 "You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. "Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (NKJV)

Eph 5:8-16 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light." See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (NKJV)

1Th 5:5 You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. (NKJV)

³ Compare: 2Co 2:14-17 Now thanks be to God who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and through us diffuses the fragrance of His knowledge in every place. For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing. To the one we are the aroma of death leading to death, and to the other the aroma of life leading to life. And who is sufficient for these things? For we are not, as so many, peddling the word of God; but as of sincerity, but as from God, we speak in the sight of God in Christ. (NKJV)

Paul tells us that his conversion serves as a pattern for those who come after him.⁴ Are we following this example? In Paul's life, there was a definite change that was evident to all. Can we say the same for ourselves? While a change may be evident, is it for the better or for worse?

All too often the change is from bad to worse. A kind and considerate individual will have some "born again experience" and he will become the most inconsiderate, arrogant and self-centered "holier than thou" person in the world. It is true that a Christian is not perfect – just forgiven, but a true Christian should not be a self-centered individual. It is difficult to believe that some self-righteous individual who causes all those around him to abhor his presence is really a Christian. Although it is natural that the Spirit of Christ who indwells us will repel the lost, we should still conduct ourselves in such a manner that those without must give us a good report.⁵

In the second chapter of Romans, Paul accuses the Jews of causing the Gentiles to blaspheme God by their actions.⁶ Because all scripture is written for our instruction, we should examine ourselves to insure that we are not doing the same. How much worse is it when Christians cause the whole world to blaspheme?

We must provide for all things honest in the sight of God and men.⁷ A businessman who is also a Christian should be the best man in town to deal with, however, the opposite is usually true. How sad it is to hear some unbeliever complain of being cheated by a "Christian" businessman.

Certainly, this businessman is not a true Christian but how much more careful this type of thing should make us. We should work all the harder to walk worthy of the vocation to which we are called.⁸

We are saved by grace but we should live our lives as though we had to earn our salvation. Let us always remember that we are not living our own lives, but Christ is living through us.⁹ This should cause us to continuously examine ourselves and our actions.

As we live our daily lives, do our actions confess our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ? Will your boss say that you are the best worker he has – one who can always be depended on to do his best -- even when he is not being watched? Or will he say that you are one of those "Christians" who uses religion as a crutch to get out of doing his job?

⁴ 1Ti 1:16 However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life. (NKJV)

⁵ 1Ti 3:7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. (KJV)

⁶ Ro 2:17-24 Behold, thou art called a Jew, and retest in the law, and makest thy boast of God, And knowest his will, and approve the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the law; And art confident that thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them which are in darkness, An instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, which hast the form of knowledge and of the truth in the law. Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preacheest a man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a man should not commit adultery, dost thou commit adultery? thou that abhorrest idols, dost thou commit sacrilege? Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written. (KJV)

⁷ Ro 12:17 Repay no one evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. (MKJV)

2Co 8:21 providing for honest things, not only before the Lord, but also before men. (MKJV)

⁸ Eph 4:1 I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, (KJV)

⁹ Ga 2:20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (KJV)

Can a friend, a neighbor or even a stranger come to you for help in his time of need or is your Christian love reserved for Sunday morning services? Ladies, is your home filled with the complaint of housework that is never done, or do you praise God for giving you a family to care for? Our joy is in the Lord and everything in the Lord is a joy, so, live in the Spirit and the lust of the flesh will not be fulfilled.¹⁰

If we, as members of Christ's body, are to fulfill our ministry and share the joy of Christ with the world, we must both experience and demonstrate that joy. One who is spiritually alive will have no trouble in doing this but to be spiritually alive, one must partake of spiritual food.

The just shall live by faith¹¹ and faith comes from studying the word of God.¹² It is impossible to live the Christian life without feeding on God's word.¹³

Only a dead man has no need of food. So, if you have no desire for spiritual food (Bible study), it is doubtful that you are spiritually alive.

Are you fulfilling your ministry? Does a ray of Sonlight shine through you or are you spreading the darkness of hypocrisy? Can your words be heard when you speak of the Lord or do your actions stop the hearing of those who would listen? Do you practice what you preach?

Certainly, we must live in the world but we must constantly guard against living like the world. We are enjoined to live peacefully with every man¹⁴ but this does not mean that we should follow along with the crowd just to avoid controversy. We are also told to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints.¹⁵

Admittedly, it is often difficult to do that which is right, especially if it means we must stand alone, when just a slight compromise of some small point might endear us to the crowd. After all, what good can come from being right if no one will listen to what we say? On the other hand, what good do we do when we speak that which is untrue?

It is a simple matter to separate ourselves from the admitted unbelievers of this world,¹⁶ but what of the "ministers of righteousness" Paul warns about?¹⁷ However difficult it may be, light must be light and it must be in contrast with darkness.

God is not a respecter of persons¹⁸ – are we, or do we follow Paul's example and oppose error

¹⁰ Ga 5:25 If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. (KJV)

Ga 5:16 This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (KJV)

¹¹ Ga 3:11 But that no one is justified by the Law in the sight of God is clear, for, "The just shall live by faith." (MKJV)

¹² Ro 10:17 So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (NKJV)

¹³ Ps 119:11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You! (NKJV)

¹⁴ Ro 12:18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. (KJV)

¹⁵ Jude 1:3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. (KJV)

¹⁶ 2Co 6:14-16 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people." (NKJV)

¹⁷ 2Co 11:13-15 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also transform themselves into ministers of righteousness, whose end will be according to their works. (NKJV)

¹⁸ Ac 10:34 Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: (KJV)

regardless of who is proclaiming it?¹⁹

Do we accept an individual or group because they are 80% correct in what they preach? A partial truth is worse than a lie because it is truth used to mislead. God told Israel to stone that prophet who was not 100% correct.²⁰ Should we not, therefore, at least admonish those who are only right four out of five times?²¹

Can we accept as Christian one who preaches that Christ died for the sins of every individual and then denies that Christ is able to save without help from those individuals by requiring them to accept His atonement? Is he a Christian who denies the total depravity of man by preaching that fallen man is even capable of making such a choice?

Is one a Christian who denies the sovereignty of God by requiring Him to offer salvation to every single individual?

Is he a Christian who charges God with impotence and injustice by preaching that Christ died to save any who are not saved?

Is he a Christian who preaches that once a person is saved, his life need not change as long as he can point to some experience he has had or some commitment he has made?

Is he a Christian who preaches that the Holy Spirit is only capable of wooing and the "good man" will accept this offer of salvation or reject it as he chooses?

These are not Christians but are instead false apostles, deceitful workers who have transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ.²² However holy they may appear or mighty their works may be, they are still lost, and we must separate ourselves from them for light has no fellowship with darkness.²³

Are you in Christ? Are you in the true light? Does the light of Christ shine through you to light the way for a lost world? Are you a ray of light exposing the evil that is hidden in the darkness?

¹⁹ Ga 2:11-14 Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. And the rest of the Jews also played the hypocrite with him, so that even Barnabas was carried away with their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter before them all, "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews? (NKJV)

²⁰ De 18:20-22 'But the prophet who presumes to speak a word in My name, which I have not commanded him to speak, or who speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die.' "And if you say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the LORD has not spoken?' "when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (NKJV)

²¹ Ga 1:6-9 I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed. (NKJV)

²² 2Co 11:13 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. (KJV)

²³ Mt 7:15-20 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. "You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? "Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. "A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. "Therefore by their fruits you will know them. (NKJV)

Then as light will dispel even the tiniest spot of darkness, so let your ray of Sonlight shine that all may see whether they walk the narrow way or the broad.²⁴

In conclusion, we say with Paul:

“Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing.

Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample. (For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.) For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself.” Php. 3:13-21 (KJV)

²⁴ Mt 7:13-14 "Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. "Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (NKJV)